Dear Youth Directors, Youth Chairs, and Youth Leaders,

Sukkot is our favorite time of year. It is one filled with fun, laughter, and good times all around. Sukkot Nation is no different. This guide is filled with questions & answers, stories & Discussion, and activities that reflect the theme of Zman Simchatainu.

Holidays are a time filled with family get-togethers and communal unity. We should not pass up on this opportunity to teach our children by examples. The information found inside this wonderful program should be used throughout the holiday to help add even more value to the holiday of Sukkot. We have 7 days of Sukkot which mean 7 days of teaching. Let us all use this time to bring our family and community together.

NCYI works hard to bring all our Young Israel families closer in a fun, creative, and educational way. We are extremely happy that our Parsha Nation series has made a real difference in so many youth programs, and families across the nation. Our success is a tribute to all who have contributed to our efforts. May you all find simcha during zman simchatainu.

Sukkot is well known for being the holiday of huts. The Torah says we should dwell in the sukkah as if it were our home. Whether it is eating, sleeping, learning, or relaxing let us try to spend as much time together in the sukkah. Just as our homes should be filled with joy, love of Torah, warmth and nurture, so shall the atmosphere of your sukkah.

May you all have a chag sameach,

National Council of Young Israel Department of Synagogue Services

Rabbis@youngisrael.org

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Program Guide Breakdown

Theme- Each year our curriculum will focus on a theme. By centering the entire year around one overarching theme, our youth group participants will understand different characteristics and concepts that will help them achieve this lofty goal. This year’s theme is Manhigut (leadership). Our goal is for our children to view themselves as leaders and to inspire them to play a leadership role every day.

Parsha Review- Each week group leaders will have the opportunity to roundup the parsha in two or three paragraphs. By giving over the parsha in a short and simple way, group participants will be able to grasp the parsha as a whole and to get them to think globally and conceptually.

Parsha Questions- No Shabbat morning group is complete without a list of parsha questions. These questions allow group participants the opportunity to win fun prizes while increasing their Torah knowledge. Questions vary from basic understanding of story line to challenging source-based material. The answers are provided as well.

Tefillah Treasure- Many youth directors have asked for help when it comes to teaching tefillah to children. This is a problem that not only shuls are dealing with. Schools, camps, and youth organizations are having trouble developing creative ideas to help children understand tefillah. Over the course of the year, this section will highlight one aspect of davening by providing both the Hebrew and English text, and one explanatory idea. The older the age group, the more we delve into the idea. This section is designed to help group participants follow the flow of tefillah while understanding what they are saying.

Group Activity- Now the fun begins! We start off with a GOAL. Each game has a purpose. The youth leaders should familiarize themselves with the goal before implementing the game.

Discussion Portion- After the game is over and the participants are settled down, the youth leaders should facilitate a discussion. The guidelines for this discussion are broken down into easy to use instructions. Youth leaders should review the discussion topics and goals before the start of morning groups.

Story- Each week we will include a story that addresses a modern day concern with lesson taken from that week’s parsha.

Jewish Leader of the Week- In keeping with our theme of Manhigut, every week a different Jewish Leader from modern Jewish history will be highlighted. This will allow group participants to expand their knowledge of history and to learn how they can be a Jewish leader in today’s society.

Teen Minyan Packet- This packet is filled with stories, riddles, points to ponder, and more.

Leader Tip- Each section has some great tips for leaders and how they should conduct that section.

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# Shabbat Morning Groups Lesson Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Duration</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>Welcome parents and children in to the group room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-35 min</td>
<td>Davening</td>
<td>Depending on your group size and level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Introduction to Yearly Theme (Manhigut)</td>
<td>Refer to Handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Chag Review</td>
<td>Prep participants for parsha questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Chag Questions</td>
<td>Prizes and awards should also be given out if participants answer correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 min</td>
<td>Understanding the Goal</td>
<td>Leaders should start prepping for Shabbat activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Your choice of two games to play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Follow Up Discussion</td>
<td>Refer to materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Chag Song</td>
<td>This is for younger groups only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 min</td>
<td>Free Game Play</td>
<td>Groups can break for free game play or continue their own programing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Story</td>
<td>Assemble in a circle and have participants read sections of the story out loud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 min</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Refer to handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 min</td>
<td>Jewish Leader of the Week</td>
<td>Refer to handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 min</td>
<td>Tefillah Treasures</td>
<td>Refer to Handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Parent Pick up/Dismissal</td>
<td>Parents pick up their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Time:</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 hours &amp; 40 min of programing!</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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"Sukkot" means "booths," and refers to the temporary dwellings that Hashem commands us to live in during this Yom Tov. A Sukkah should have at least 2 and a half walls.

The covering of the Sukkah, or the Schach (literally, covering) must be a material that grew from the earth and was cut off from the earth. This includes tree branches, corn stalks, bamboo reeds, and sticks. But metals, leather, and growing trees are excluded. Schach must be left loose, not bundled together or tied down. Schach must be placed sparsely enough that rain can get in, and preferably sparsely enough that the stars can be seen, but not so sparsely that there is more sunlight than shade. The Schach must be put on last.

Throughout Sukkot, we have special “guests” that come to visit us called Ushpizin. They are Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yosef, Moshe, Aharon, and David. The Mitzvah to "dwell" in a Sukkah means to live there, and includes sleeping in the Sukkah.

**LEADER TIP:** Take advantage of spending as much time in the sukkah as possible! Take your kids out to your shul sukkah! If you can, before or after Yom Tov decorate the shul sukkah as a group!
SUKKOT QUESTIONS

Questions

1. What is the first day of Sukkot in the Hebrew calendar?
2. How many days do we celebrate Sukkot?
3. What are the Arba Minim?
4. What is another name for Sukkot?
5. What does the word Sukkot mean?
6. When is it a tradition to start building the Sukkah?
7. What do we put on top of the Sukkah?
8. Who are the Ushpizin, or special guests, that come visit us on Sukkot?
9. What directions do we shake the Lulav and Etrog?
10. What does the holiday of Sukkot commemorate?

Answers

1. 15th of Tishrei
2. 7
3. Etrog, Lulav, Hadassim, and Aravot
4. Chag Simchateinu (and Chag Ha’Asif)
5. Booth or Hut
6. Right after Yom Kippur
7. Schach
8. Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yosef, Moshe, Aharon, and David
9. Right, left, forward, backwards, up, and down
10. The Jewish people lived in Sukkot while travelling through the desert for 40 years.

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GOAL: To teach the kids the meaning of the Arba Minim, every person has something special and different to contribute to the world and that achdut means bringing different people together for a common goal.

ACTIVITY: Start off by explaining to the kids about the Arba Minim and what they are- etrog, lulav, hadassim, and aravot. Then move on to the game.

“Fruit Basket”
This game requires exactly enough chairs for everyone playing, minus one. The kids will take their chairs and make a circle surrounding the group leader leading the game who will be in the middle explaining the rules. Going around the circle, the group leaders will identify the kids as one of four different things: Lulav, Etrog, Arava, Hadas. Either before Shabbat you can make cards with these names and give them out, or you can simply give them their names. When the group leader yells out one of the four items, each kid who was given that name must get up and try to find an empty seat. At the same time, the group leader will attempt to sit down as well, leaving one person in the middle without a seat. It’s then that kid’s turn to call out another of the four items. If the person in the middle decides to be a bit trickier, he can call out two Minim at a time or “Arba Minim” where everyone gets up and must try to find an empty seat.

DISCUSSION: Ask the kids if anyone knows what the Arba Minim represent. The Arba Minim are often compared to four types of Jews. The Etrog has taste and smell, so it represents people who learn Torah and do Mitzvot. The Lulav has taste but no smell, so it stands for those people who learn Torah but don’t do Mitzvot. The Hadas has smell but no taste, so it represents people who do Mitzvot but don’t learn Torah. The Arava, has neither taste nor smell, so it represents those who neither learn Torah nor do Mitzvot. In Judaism, we have many different types of Jews who, although seem very different from one another, are all in the same “circle”. Everyone has something different, yet something special to offer to the world. Ask the group how this connects to the game they played. The message of the Arba Minim is that achdut doesn’t mean people who are all very similar coming together- it means that very different people need to come together, because that’s when we can really create something great.

LEADER TIP: As with all games, do not wait until the kids get tired; end the game at its peak.
Before you read: Happiness has a secret formula. On Sukkot - the Jewish 'happiness festival' - the Torah asks us to try our best to be in a happy, joyful frame of mind. How we choose to look at our life and the things in it, can determine whether we'll be happy on Sukkot - and all year long.

PICTURE PERFECT

"It's so nice having both of my granddaughters here at the same time," the smiling older woman said to Laura and her cousin, Amy, who'd come with their families on a holiday visit. "I heard you've both started taking after-school art lessons," Grandma said. "Tell me, how is it going?"

"Well," Laura said through her wide grin, "I'm happy to say that it's going fantasic! I'm in a class with just nine other students, so we get lots of personal attention from the instructor. And even though it's a small class, everyone has such different personalities - some kids are more serious, and others are more laid back - so it's guaranteed never to be boring. Also, the instructor is great! She really wants us to develop our skills, so she gives us these very interesting practice exercises to do and she also assigns projects for us to do at home. Oh, and the best part is that she takes us on trips to art museums and explains the history of the famous paintings we see and what it is about them that makes them great."

"Wow, that's just wonderful," Grandma said to the beaming Laura. "And how are your art classes going, Amy?"

Amy was distractedly looking out the window as her Laura spoke, and now let out a sigh. "I must tell you, not so good - in fact quite bad."

"Really? Why is that?"

"First of all," she frowned, "the class is too small. I mean, how can a person draw when the teacher is hovering over you all the time? And at least, if you're stuck in a small class you'd think everyone would get along - right? But half the class is too intense, making everybody nervous and the other half just wants to joke around all the time. Not only that - it's hard. The instructor is always making us do these pointless drawing exercises, plus homework assignments! That is, except for the times that she
drags us out to some dusty art museum and talks our ears off about the prehistoric pictures on the wall!"

"Hmm, it sounds like you're really not having a good time," Grandma nodded her head. "You know, Laura's art class sounds so wonderful. Maybe you should see if you could switch over to the class that she's taking? You'd be much happier."

"Huh?" Amy said, "What do you mean switch to Laura's..." The two girls looked at each other then they both started laughing.

"Grandma," Amy finally blurted out, "we are in the same art class - didn't you know?"

"Oh, really?" Grandma said, with that special smile that told you she might just know more than you think she does. "Well then, if that's so, then maybe all you have to do is see if you could just switch the way you ... see."

**Discussion Questions:**

Q. How did Laura feel about her art class?
A. She was happy about it because she looked at it in a positive way.

Q. How did Amy feel about it?
A. Even though she was in the same class, she was unhappy because she looked at it negatively.

**LEADER TIP:** What makes you the happiest? What makes Sukkot such a happy holiday that’s its call Chag Simchateinu?
Donna Gracia Mendes
1510-1569

Dona Gracia Nasi, born in Lisbon in 1510, was one of the wealthiest Jewish women in Renaissance Europe. She married Francisco Mendes in 1528. The wealthy couple provided escape routes for Jews victimized by the Inquisition. After Francisco died, she partnered with her brother-in-law in Antwerp, who left her everything in 1542. In Turkey, she could finally practice Judaism openly – and more. She created an underground railroad from Portugal for Jews who were forced to convert to leave. Settling with her daughter in Constantinople, she was guardian angel of the Jewish community, which included confronting Pope Paul IV about his anti-Semitic policies. In 1558, the “mogela” arranged with the Turkish sultan to buy the city of Tiberias, hoping to make it an independent Jewish city-state!

**LEADER TIP:** What would you do if your country made you convert out of Judaism? This question might be difficult for Kindergarten kids. But maybe touch upon the idea of people making you do the wrong thing. For a 2nd grader it would be interesting to see what they say to the original question.
Hoshanot, coming from the words “hoshah nah”—“bring us salvation, please”, are the special tefillot recited each day of Sukkot while holding the Lulav and Etrog and circling around the Bimah. In the times of the Beit HaMikdash, the Kohanim would put Aravot next to the mizbeach to add joy to the holiday. They would then sound the shofar, circle the mizbeach once, and say, "Anah Hashem hoshiah nah. Anah Hashem hatzlichah nah(Please, G-d, bring us salvation. Please, G-d, bring us success).” On the last day of Sukkot, known as Hoshanah Rabbah, “the Great Hoshanah,” the Kohanim would circle the altar seven times. Today instead of circling the mizbeach, we circle a Torah scroll held near the Bimah. Since each stanza of the tefillah is accompanied by the word “hoshanah,” these prayers are referred to as Hoshanot.

**LEADER TIP:** Play musical chairs in honor of Hoshanot!
Sukkot, also called Zman Simchateinu, begins on the 15th of Tishrei, five days after Yom Kippur and lasts for seven days. Sukkot is immediately followed by two separate Yamim Tovim, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, but we commonly think of them as part of Sukkot. In Eretz Yisrael, Sukkot lasts for seven days followed by one separate Yom Tov, Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah. The first two days are Yom Tov and days 3-7 are Chol HaMoed with the last day also being called Hoshana Raba.

"Sukkot" means "booths," and refers to the temporary dwellings that Hashem commands us to live in during this Yom Tov. A Sukkah should have at least 2 and a half walls. The side of a building can be considered a wall. The walls must be made from any material that will withstand an ordinary wind. A commonly used material is canvas, tied or nailed down so that it does not flap in the wind. The area of the Sukkah can be any size, as long as it is large enough for you to fulfill the Mitzvah of dwelling in it (the minimum size is approx. 23-28 inches by 23-28 inches.

The covering of the Sukkah, or the Schach (literally, covering) must be a material that grew from the earth and was cut off from the earth. This includes tree branches, corn stalks, bamboo reeds, and sticks. But metals, leather, and growing trees are excluded. Schach must be left loose, not bundled together or tied down. Schach must be placed sparsely enough that rain can get in, and preferably sparsely enough that the stars can be seen, but not so sparsely that there is more sunlight than shade, and not more than ten inches open at any point. The Schach must be put on last. It is a Mitzvah, and of course, a lot of fun, to also decorate the Sukkah. Throughout Sukkot, we have special “guests” that come to visit us called Ushpizin. They are Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yosef, Moshe, Aharon, and David.

The three branches are bound together and referred to collectively as the Lulav. The etrog is held in the left and the Lulav in the right hand. With these four species in hand, one recites a bracha and waves them in all six directions (east, south, west, north, up and down, symbolizing the fact that Hashem is everywhere). The Arba Minim are also held during Hallel and Hoshanot.

**LEADER TIP:** Take advantage of spending as much time in the sukkah as possible! Take your kids out to your shul sukkah! If you can, before or after Yom Tov decorate the shul sukkah as a group!
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8. Who are the Ushpizin, or special guests, that come visit us on Sukkot?
9. What directions do we shake the Lulav and Etrog?
10. What does the holiday of Sukkot commemorate?
11. Each of the Arba Minim represent a part of the body, what does the Lulav represent?
12. What does the Etrong represent?
13. How many Hadassim are there?
14. How many Aravot are there?
15. What are Hoshanot?

Answers
1. 15th of Tishrei
2. 7
3. Etrog, Lulav, Hadassim, and Aravot
4. Chag Simchateinu (and Chag Ha’Asif)
5. Booth or Hut
6. Right after Yom Kippur
7. Schach
8. Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yosef, Moshe, Aharon, and David
9. Right, left, forward, backwards, up, and down
10. The Jewish people lived in Sukkot while travelling through the desert for 40 years.
11. Backbone
12. Heart
13. 3
14. 2
15. A special tefillah where we circle around the Bimah with our Arba Minim in remembrance of when they would circle around the Mizbeyach in the times of the Beit HaMikdash.

LEADER TIP: Split up the group into two teams, Lulav VS Etrog. Everything you do over the groups should re-enforce the idea of the holiday.
**GOAL:** To have the kids build their own Sukkahs and explain to them the rules about how to build them.

**ACTIVITY:** “Edible Sukkahs”

**Supplies you’ll need:** Graham crackers, marshmallow fluff, thing pretzel sticks, green sour sticks, marshmallow fluff, and any other candy or snacks that could be used as decorations (ex: jelly beans, Fruit Loops, candy corn, etc.)

Start off by explaining to the kids why we celebrate the holiday of Sukkot...

When we left Mitzrayim, the Jewish people travelled through the desert for 40 years. Along their way, they built temporary homes called Sukkot. To remind us of their journey and how Hashem helped protect them throughout the way, on Sukkot we live in sukkahs for seven days. We’re supposed to do as much as possible in the sukkah, including eating, sleeping, and just hanging out!

How do we build a sukkah?

A sukkah needs to have at least two and a half walls. The walls can be made out of anything as long as it stays nice and sturdy and doesn’t move around or fall down. The roof, or schach, must be made from something that grew from the ground but no longer connected to the ground, it must be cut off from the tree. It also must be possible to see at least three stars at night through the roof. It needs to be mostly covered with areas to be able to see through.

Now that everyone knows the rules, it’s time to build our sukkahs! Have the kids use the graham crackers as walls and the green sour sticks and pretzel sticks as schach. The marshmallow fluff should be used to stick the walls and schach together as well as hang up the decorations. Enjoy your yummy Sukkah!

**DISCUSSION:** After everyone makes their sukkahs, feel free to let them enjoy the “fruit of their labor”! You can do trivia questions and give out the extra snacks as prizes! You can also go into a discussion afterwards about what it must’ve been like for the Jews to travel in the desert and how Hashem was with them every single day throughout their journey. How can we see Hashem every day in our own lives? Talk it out together!

**LEADER TIP:** Make it into a competition! Have kids present their sukkahs either individually or in groups and explain what makes theirs the best one!
**SUkkot story**

**Before you read:** Happiness has a secret formula. On Sukkot - the Jewish 'happiness festival' - the Torah asks us to try our best to be in a happy, joyful frame of mind. How we choose to look at our life and the things in it, can determine whether we'll be happy on Sukkot - and all year long.

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Amy was distractedly looking out the window as her Laura spoke, and now let out a sigh. "I must tell you, not so good - in fact quite bad."

"Really? Why is that?"

"First of all," she frowned, "the class is too small. I mean, how can a person draw when the teacher is hovering over you all the time? And at least, if you're stuck in a small class you'd think everyone would get along - right? But half the class is too intense, making everybody nervous and the other half just wants to joke around all the time. Not only that - it's hard. The instructor is always making us do these pointless drawing exercises, plus homework assignments! That is, except for the times that she..."
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"Oh, really?" Grandma said, with that special smile that told you she might just know more than you think she does. "Well then, if that's so, then maybe all you have to do is see if you could just switch the way you ... see."

Discussion Questions:

Q. What life-lesson do you think someone could learn from this story?
A. Happiness doesn't as much depend on any particular situation as how you choose to view the situation you're in.

Q. Who was being more realistic: Laura or Amy?
A. In general, the 'reality' of a situation is a product of how we choose to look at it. Almost any situation can be viewed as positive or negative. While Laura may not have been any more realistic than Amy, she was just as realistic - and a whole lot happier!

LEADER TIP: What makes you the happiest? What makes Sukkot such a happy holiday that’s its call Chag Simchateinu?
JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

Donna Gracia Mendes
1510-1569

Few other figures in Jewish history, particularly in the Middle Ages, played such an inspiring and beneficial part for their fellow Jews as did the noble Jewish lady Dona Gracia. Many thousands of Jews forced to convert and other persecuted Jews called her “Our Angel.” Dona Gracia was born in Portugal in the early sixteenth century, to the noble family of Benveniste, which had come there from Spain after the flight from the Inquisition. Herself from a rich home, she had married the even richer Francisco Mendes-Nasi, member of one of the largest international trade and banking firms in the world. When her husband died while still young, Dona Gracia decided to leave Portugal together with her only child, Reyna, and several other relatives. For Portugal was then beginning to feel the mighty arms of the Inquisition, which made life unbearable for the conversos, the people who, like Dona Gracia, were living secretly as good Jews but had adopted the Catholic church for appearances’ sake, in the hope for a chance of escape. Though Dona Gracia had to leave a considerable part of her huge wealth behind, she fled Portugal and settled in Antwerp, where her brother-in-law Diogo was the head of the branch of the Mendes-Nasi firm, which had connections with most European courts. Many other conversos were then coming to the capital of Flanders to build new homes, but the powerful arms of the church began to be felt there too, and the conversos found they had to be even more careful there to appear as good Christians, instead of gaining the freedom they had sought when they fled Spain and Portugal. By 1552, Dona Gracia settled in Constantinople, where she became the center of worldwide help to conversos and Jews in suffering. Her wealth was used not only for business, but to buy the favors of princes, opening many doors to the persecuted.

LEADER TIP: What would you do if your country made you convert out of Judaism?
Hoshanot, coming from the words “hoshah nah”—“bring us salvation, please”, are the special tefillot recited each day of Sukkot while holding the Lulav and Etrog and circling around the Bimah. In the times of the Beit HaMikdash, the Kohanim would put Aravot next to the mizbeach to add joy to the holiday. They would then sound the shofar, circle the mizbeach once, and say, "Anah Hashem hoshiah nah. Anah Hashem hatzlichah nah (Please, G-d, bring us salvation. Please, G-d, bring us success)." On the last day of Sukkot, known as Hoshanah Rabbah, “the Great Hoshanah,” the Kohanim would circle the altar seven times. Today instead of circling the mizbeach, we circle a Torah scroll held near the Bimah. Since each stanza of the tefillah is accompanied by the word “hoshanah,” these prayers are referred to as Hoshanot. We do Hoshanot every day of Sukkot right after Musaf. First, we take out a Torah is taken from the aron, which remains open during Hoshanot. The Torah is brought to the bimah so that the chazan and the congregation can make a circle around the bimah and Torah while carrying the Arba Minim. We hold the lulav and etrog together and press them against our heart. The chazan says the following four lines out loud, and the congregation repeats after him:

Please save, for Your sake, our G-d, please save!
Please save, for Your sake, our Creator, please save!
Please save, for Your sake, our Redeemer, please save!
Please save, for Your sake, our Attender, please save!

We then circle the bimah counter clockwise and recite the specific Hoshanot for the respective day of chag.

LEADER TIP: Play musical chairs in honor of Hoshanot!
If you find this is too simple for this age group, make up your own game.
Sukkot, also called Zman Simchateinu, begins on the 15th of Tishrei, five days after Yom Kippur and lasts for seven days. Sukkot is immediately followed by two separate Yamim Tovim, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, but we commonly think of them as part of Sukkot. In Eretz Yisrael, Sukkot lasts for seven days followed by one separate Yom Tov, Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah. The first two days are Yom Tov and days 3-7 are Chol HaMoed with the last day also being called Hoshana Raba.

"Sukkot" means "booths," and refers to the temporary dwellings that Hashem commands us to live in during this Yom Tov as our ancestors, Bnei Yisrael wandered through the desert for forty years, living in temporary shelters. A Sukkah should have at least 2 and a half walls. The side of a building can be considered a wall. The walls must be made from any material that will withstand an ordinary wind. A commonly used material is canvas, tied or nailed down so that it does not flap in the wind. The area of the Sukkah can be any size, as long as it is large enough for you to fulfill the Mitzvah of dwelling in it (the minimum size is approx. 23-28 inches by 23-28 inches.

The Schach (literally, covering) must be a material that grew from the earth and was cut off from the earth. This includes tree branches, corn stalks, bamboo reeds, and sticks. But metals, leather, and growing trees are excluded. Schach must be left loose, not bundled together or tied down. Schach must be placed sparsely enough that rain can get in, and preferably sparsely enough that the stars can be seen, but not so sparsely that there is more sunlight than shade, and not more than ten inches open at any point. The Schach must be put on last. It is a Mitzvah, and of course, a lot of fun, to also decorate the Sukkah. Throughout Sukkot, we have special "guests" that come to visit us called Ushpizin. They are Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yosef, Moshe, Aharon, and David.

The Mitzvah to "dwell" in a Sukkah means to live there, and includes sleeping in the Sukkah. The Talmud says Tayshvu K’ain Taduru, “Dwell in the Sukkah as you would live in your home." However, if the weather, climate, and one's health prevent sleeping in the Sukkah, one can fulfill the Mitzvah by simply eating all of one's meals there. One should however, make an effort to live in the Sukkah as much as possible, including sleeping in it. The Torah commands us to "take for yourselves on the first day “The Four Species”, or Arba Minim.

The Arba Minim are Etrong, Lulav, Hadassim, and Aravot. We are commanded to take these four plants and use them to "rejoice before Hashem." The three branches are bound together and referred to collectively as the Lulav. The etrog is held in the left and the Lulav in the right hand. With these four species in hand, one recites a bracha and waves them in all six directions (east, south, west, north, up and down, symbolizing the fact that Hashem is everywhere). The Arba Minim are also held during Hallel and Hoshanot.

LEADER TIP: Take advantage of spending as much time in the sukkah as possible! Take your kids out to your shul sukkah! If you can, before or after Yom Tov decorate the shul sukkah as a group!
1. According to the Torah, what three basic requirements define a material as valid for use as a succa roof?
   It must grow from the ground, no longer be connected to the ground, and not be receptive to tumah (ritual defilement).

2. If the succa causes discomfort (e.g., it's too cold) to the extent that under similar conditions you would leave your very own house, you are exempt from the mitzvah. Why?
   Because the commandment of living in a succa is to dwell in the succa for seven days the same way you dwell in your house the rest of the year. (Mishna Berura 640:13)

3. What two things are forbidden to do outside of the succa all seven days of the festival?
   Eat (an 'established' meal) or sleep. (Orach Chaim 639:2)

4. What is the absolute minimum number of meals a person is required to eat in the succa during the seven day holiday?
   One. Eating a meal in the succa the first night of Succos is a requirement. The rest of the festival, a person can eat 'snacks' which are not required to be eaten in a succa. (Outside Israel, one must eat a meal the second night of Succos as well. However, there is no requirement to live outside Israel!) (Orach Chaim 639:3)

5. Besides referring to the tree and its fruit, what does the word "esrog" mean literally?
   Beauty. (Ramban Vayikra 23:40)

6. What is the minimum length of a lulav?
   Its spine must be at least 4 tefachim (halachic handbreadths).

7. What is the maximum percentage a person is required to add to the purchase price of his esrog in order to obtain an esrog of greater beauty?
   33.3% (Orach Chaim 656:1)

8. On the Shabbos that occurs during Succos, we read the Book of Koheles, in which King Solomon refers to himself as "Koheles." Why is King Solomon called Koheles?
   Because he gathered (kihale) vast wisdom, and because he, as king, gathered the nation on Succos after the Sabbatical year. (Rashi, Koheles 1:1)

9. What prohibition could a person transgress simply by sitting in the succa on the eighth day of Succos?
   Bal Tosif - "Do not add to the mitzvos." The commandment to live in the succa applies for only seven days. To sit in the succa on the eighth day with intent to fulfill the mitzvah transgresses "bal tosif." (Orach Chaim 666:1)

10. We hold a tallis over the heads of the people who read the end of the Torah and the beginning of the Torah. Why?
    It represents the wedding canopy, symbolizing that through the Torah we wed ourselves to Hashem.

   **LEADER TIP:** Split up the group into two teams, Lulav VS Etrog
SUUKKOT ACTIVITY

GOAL: To teach the kids the meaning of the Arba Minim. That every person has something special and different to contribute to the world and that achdut means bringing different people together for a common goal.

ACTIVITY: “Team Charades”

The group leader will start off this game by announcing to the kids that everyone (boys and girls separate) must pair off and form a chair with their partner. The group leader will walk around and compare to the different ways the chairs were formed. Then, two groups will pair up (4 people) and the group leader will tell them to make a table, give them a few moments and walk around comparing. You may do this with different numbers of people in a group, and different items to create. The final item they will create will be with around 8 people per group, depending on the crowd. You will ask them to make a bottle factory using all necessary people for all necessary parts of the factory. Give them hints if they need them. (bottles need to be made, filled, capped, labeled, etc.) Each group should present to the rest of the kids how they formed their factory.

“Conductor”

Players sit in a circle. Players are divided into four teams. Each team must shout a word when the group leader (conductor) points to them. You can choose any words that have a good beat to them. A good set of words that works is “Chinga” for the first group, “Pa-Na-Ma” for the 2nd group, “Vie-did-ee-doo” for the 3rd and “Ehhhhhhhhhhhh...Boom” for the 4th. The group leader has to create a rhythm by combining the different shouts. Variation: There’s a similar game using the words “peanut butter” (repeated slowly in a low voice), “jelly jelly jelly jelly” (in a sing-song, like na-na-na-na poo-poo), and “bread” (repeated quickly)
**DISCUSSION:** Ask the group what they thought the message of the charades game was. From the game, we see that the bigger the goal we had, the more people we needed to be involved doing different things. In the last round of the game, one person capped the bottles, while one person was the conveyer belt. Both jobs are important, and without each job, the bottles would not exist. So too regarding Am Yisrael- we need all different types of people to unite for a big goal. Ask the group what they thought the message of the conductor game was. In the game, everyone has something to add. By themselves, they were ok- it might be fun to say “chinga” a lot, but it would get boring after a little bit. But when you put it all together, something really amazing could be created. Ask the group if they can connect this to Sukkot and the Arba Minim. This is the message of the Arba Minim- The four species are often compared to four types of Jews. The Etrog has taste and smell, so it represents people who learn Torah and do Mitzvot. The Lulav has taste but no smell, so it stands for those people who learn Torah but don’t do Mitzvot. The Hadas has smell but no taste, so it represents people who do Mitzvot but don’t learn Torah. The Arava, has neither taste nor smell, so it represents those who neither learn Torah nor do Mitzvot. The message of the Arba minim is that we need to bring together all types of Jews to reach our goals. Achdut doesn’t mean lots of people who are the same uniting, it means very different people still being able to work together to create something wonderful.

**LEADER TIP:** Give out Mike and Ikes in honor of the Arba Minim representing different kinds of people and flavors!
SUkkOT STORY

Before you read: Happiness has a secret formula. On Sukkot - the Jewish 'happiness festival' - the Torah asks us to try our best to be in a happy, joyful frame of mind. How we choose to look at our life and the things in it, can determine whether we'll be happy on Sukkot - and all year long.

PICTURE PERFECT

"It's so nice having both of my granddaughters here at the same time," the smiling older woman said to Laura and her cousin, Amy, who'd come with their families on a holiday visit. "I heard you've both started taking after-school art lessons," Grandma said. "Tell me, how is it going?"

"Well," Laura said through her wide grin, "I'm happy to say that it's going fan-tastic! I'm in a class with just nine other students, so we get lots of personal attention from the instructor. And even though it's a small class, everyone has such different personalities - some kids are more serious, and others are more laid back - so it's guaranteed never to be boring. Also, the instructor is great! She really wants us to develop our skills, so she gives us these very interesting practice exercises to do and she also assigns projects for us to do at home. Oh, and the best part is that she takes us on trips to art museums and explains the history of the famous paintings we see and what it is about them that makes them great."

"Wow, that's just wonderful," Grandma said to the beaming Laura. "And how are your art classes going, Amy?"

Amy was distractedly looking out the window as her Laura spoke, and now let out a sigh. "I must tell you, not so good - in fact quite bad."

"Really? Why is that?"

"First of all," she frowned, "the class is too small. I mean, how can a person draw when the teacher is hovering over you all the time? And at least, if you're stuck in a small class you'd think everyone would get along - right? But half the class is too intense, making everybody nervous and the other half just wants to joke around all the time. Not only that - it's hard. The instructor is always making us do these pointless drawing exercises, plus homework assignments! That is, except for the times that she
drags us out to some dusty art museum and talks our ears off about the prehistoric pictures on the wall!"

"Hmm, it sounds like you're really not having a good time," Grandma nodded her head. "You know, Laura's art class sounds so wonderful. Maybe you should see if you could switch over to the class that she's taking? You'd be much happier."

"Huh?" Amy said, "What do you mean switch to Laura's..." The two girls looked at each other then they both started laughing.

"Grandma," Amy finally blurted out, "we are in the same art class - didn't you know?"

"Oh, really?" Grandma said, with that special smile that told you she might just know more than you think she does. "Well then, if that's so, then maybe all you have to do is see if you could just switch the way you ... see."

Discussion Questions:

Q. Do you believe that happiness is a choice? Why or why not?
A. If a person views an event or situation as positive, he will naturally be happy. If he views it as negative, he will be unhappy. Every situation or event has positive and negative aspects (albeit, sometimes the positive ones dominate or vice versa); when we choose whether to focus on the positive or negative, we are in effect choosing whether to be happy or not.

Q. What possibly can be positive aspects of 'bad' situations, such as disasters, crises, etc.?
A. As the saying goes, 'it could always be worse' - focusing on that can provide positive feelings even in the most trying times. On a deeper, spiritual level, our sages and mystics teach us that whatever G-d sends our way - without exception - is, in the ultimate sense, the best possible thing for the growth of our eternal soul and the ultimate, unending pleasure it will experience in the future.

LEADER TIP: What makes you the happiest? What makes Sukkot such a happy holiday that's its call Chag Simchateinu?
Few other figures in Jewish history, particularly in the Middle Ages, played such an inspiring and beneficial part for their fellow Jews as did the noble Jewish lady Dona Gracia. Many thousands of Jews forced to convert and other persecuted Jews called her “Our Angel.” Dona Gracia was born in Portugal in the early sixteenth century, to the noble family of Benveniste, which had come there from Spain after the flight from the Inquisition. Herself from a rich home, she had married the even richer Francisco Mendes-Nasi, member of one of the largest international trade and banking firms in the world. When her husband died while still young, Dona Gracia decided to leave Portugal together with her only child, Reyna, and several other relatives. For Portugal was then beginning to feel the mighty arms of the Inquisition, which made life unbearable for the conversos, the people who, like Dona Gracia, were living secretly as good Jews but had adopted the Catholic church for appearances’ sake, in the hope for a chance of escape. Though Dona Gracia had to leave a considerable part of her huge wealth behind, she fled Portugal and settled in Antwerp, where her brother-in-law Diogo was the head of the branch of the Mendes-Nasi firm, which had connections with most European courts. Many other conversos were then coming to the capital of Flanders to build new homes, but the powerful arms of the church began to be felt there too, and the conversos found they had to be even more careful there to appear as good Christians, instead of gaining the freedom they had sought when they fled Spain and Portugal. By 1552, Dona Gracia settled in Constantinople, where she became the center of worldwide help to conversos and Jews in suffering. Her wealth was used not only for business, but to buy the favors of princes, opening many doors to the persecuted. She fostered Jewish culture, and poets wrote at great length in praise of her many achievements as a patron and helper of Jewry in those dark days. She built synagogues, established yeshivot and libraries, and supported scholars and students of the Torah. She helped to resettle hundreds of conversos, to enable them to return to their Jewish faith.

LEADER TIP: What would you do if your country made you convert out of Judaism? This would be a great opportunity to look up different sources of what the rabbis say on this topic.
Hoshanot, coming from the words “hoshah nah”—“bring us salvation, please”, are the special tefillot recited each day of Sukkot while holding the Lulav and Etrog and circling around the Bimah. In the times of the Beit HaMikdash, the Kohanim would put Aravot next to the mizbeach to add joy to the holiday. They would then sound the shofar, circle the mizbeach once, and say, "Anah Hashem hoshiah nah. Anah Hashem hatzlichah nah (Please, G-d, bring us salvation. Please, G-d, bring us success).” On the last day of Sukkot, known as Hoshanah Rabbah, “the Great Hoshanah,” the Kohanim would circle the altar seven times. Today instead of circling the mizbeach, we circle a Torah scroll held near the Bimah. Since each stanza of the tefillah is accompanied by the word “hoshanah,” these prayers are referred to as Hoshanot. We do Hoshanot every day of Sukkot right after Musaf. First, we take out a Torah is taken from the aron, which remains open during Hoshanot. The Torah is brought to the bimah so that the chazan and the congregation can make a circle around the bimah and Torah while carrying the Arba Minim. We hold the lulav and etrog together and press them against our heart. The chazan says the following four lines out loud, and the congregation repeats after him: Please save, for Your sake, our G-d, please save! Please save, for Your sake, our Creator, please save! Please save, for Your sake, our Redeemer, please save! Please save, for Your sake, our Attender, please save! We then circle the bimah counter clockwise and recite the specific Hoshanot for the respective day of chag.

Hoshanot were composed by the great poet, Rabbi Elazar Hakalir, who lived during the time of the Mishnah. The verses are arranged according to the aleph-bet. After circling the bimah, we return to our place and finish reading the rest of Hoshanot. We continue holding the Arba Minim until right before the chazan starts Kaddish (others have the custom to hold them until after Kaddish). On Shabbat, we do not circle the bimah with the Arba Minim. Some have the custom to open the ark and recite Hoshanot without circling or holding the Arba Minim. Others skip that day’s Hoshanot altogether. The seventh day of Sukkot is called Hoshanah Rabbah, literally “the Great Hoshanah,” thus named because there is a greater number of Hoshanot that are recited on this day. It is considered the day in which the new year’s judgment, which was reached on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, is finalized. It is also the day that Hashem judges how much rain we’ll receive in the coming year. On Hoshanah Rabbah, we take out all of the Torah scrolls. We then circle the bimah seven times, as our ancestors did in the Beit Hamikdash on this day. During the first six circuits, we repeat the Hoshanot prayers from the previous six days. During the final circuit, we say the additional stanza for Hoshanah Rabbah.

**LEADER TIP:** Play musical chairs in honor of Hoshanot!
This Week in Jewish History
October 9, 1994
Nachshon Wachsman Kidnapped

Nachshon Mordechai Wachsman, born April 3rd, 1975, was an IDF soldier who was kidnapped and held hostage by Hamas for a period of 6 days. He was executed during an attempted rescue operation. At home on a leave, the IDF instructed Wachsman to attend a one-day training course in northern Israel. After completing the training, Wachsman was dropped off at the Bnai Atarot junction, a highly populated area in central Israel, where he could either catch a bus or hitchhike to Jerusalem. Israeli intelligence learned that Wachsman entered a car with Hamas Activists wearing kippot, a Tanach and siddur on the dashboard, and Chassidic music playing. On Tuesday October 11th, a videotape was broadcast showing Wachsman, with hands and feet bound, before a keffiyeh-covered radical, displaying the soldier’s identity card. After the radical recited the hostage’s home address and identity number, Wachsman spoke with the armed radical behind him: “The group from Hamas kidnapped me. They are demanding the release of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and another 200 from Israeli prison. If their demands are not met, they will execute me on Friday at 8 P.M.” Nachshon’s parents personally appealed to world leaders including then Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, American President Bill Clinton, and Muslim religious leaders who urged Hamas to release the soldier. On Thursday night, with 24 hours until the ultimatum, tefillah rallies were held throughout the world. Over 100,000 people representing all religious, political, and social segments of the Israeli population gathered at the Kotel. Responding to a request by Esther Wachsman, Nachshon’s mother, women around the world lit an extra Shabbat candle for her son. In the meantime, the Israeli military had captured the driver of the car which picked up Wachsman. They learned from the informant that Wachsman entered a car with Hamas Activists wearing kippot, a Tanach and siddur on the dashboard, and Chassidic music playing. On Tuesday October 11th, a videotape was broadcast showing Wachsman, with hands and feet bound, before a keffiyeh-covered radical, displaying the soldier’s identity card. After the radical recited the hostage’s home address and identity number, Wachsman spoke with the armed radical behind him: “The group from Hamas kidnapped me. They are demanding the release of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and another 200 from Israeli prison. If their demands are not met, they will execute me on Friday at 8 P.M.” Nachshon’s parents personally appealed to world leaders including then Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, American President Bill Clinton, and Muslim religious leaders who urged Hamas to release the soldier. On Thursday night, with 24 hours until the ultimatum, tefillah rallies were held throughout the world. Over 100,000 people representing all religious, political, and social segments of the Israeli population gathered at the Kotel. Responding to a request by Esther Wachsman, Nachshon’s mother, women around the world lit an extra Shabbat candle for her son. In the meantime, the Israeli military had captured the driver of the car which picked up Wachsman. They learned from the informant that Wachsman was being held in a village called Bir Nabalah, a location under Israeli control and only ten minutes away from his home in the Ramot neighborhood of Jerusalem. Prime Minister Rabin authorized a military rescue attempt. At 8:00 PM that night, at the hour of the ultimatum, the Wachsman family was informed that Nachshon had been killed during a failed military rescue attempt. An Israeli soldier was also killed in the crossfire. Wachsman was buried on Saturday night October 15th, 1994 in Har Herzl military cemetery.

FIND…

Lulav
Etrog
Hadassim
Aravot
Sukkah
Schach
Ushpizin
Hoshanot

STAT LINE OF THE WEEK- SUKKOT

1. RUSTIC ROOTS--Archaeologists have unearthed 5,000-year-old etrog seeds in ancient Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). An etrog is one of the four species that the Torah commands us to use in celebration of Sukkot (Vayikra 23:40).
2. BEDTIME BLESSING--The Talmud explains that if we see an etrog in a dream, it means that God considers us precious.
3. RITUAL RECYCLABLES--Pieces of dried etrog can be combined with cloves to enhance the spices used during Havdalah. Also, the lulav-palm, willow, and myrtle branches--can be lit as kindling when we burn hametz before Pesach.
4. SMALLEST SUKKAH--Jewish legal scholars determined that a sukkah should be no smaller than 27”x27”--the smallest space a person could occupy while sitting or crouching at a table.
5. LOTSA LIGHTS--The Jerusalem Municipality and Israel Electric Company built the world’s largest sukkah last year, stringing 2.5 miles of electrical wiring, which lit 144,000 miniature light bulbs.
TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK

HOW MANY PLANT SPECIES ARE THERE IN THE JERUSALEM BOTANICAL GARDENS?

Email your answers to RABBIS@YOUNGISRAEL.ORG along with your NAME and AGE for a chance to win AWESOME PRIZES! Each correct answer will enter your name into a raffle that will happen once a month. Behatzlacha!

THIS JUST IN!

- Babies are born without kneecaps. They don't appear until the child reaches 2-6 years of age.
- The 3 most valuable brand names on earth: Marlboro, Coca-Cola, and Budweiser, in that order.
- Coca Cola was originally green.

For more info please feel free to contact us at Rabbis@youngisrael.org

Parsha Points to Ponder...

The Talmud tells us an interesting hypothetical conversation that takes place between Hashem and the non-Jews. They would claim that if they were given a second chance to accept the Torah they would keep it just like the Jews do. Hashem says to them, “I have little Mitzvah called Succah. Go keep it.” Immediately they will go and build a Succah and enter it. Then the sun starts beating down and in the heat they will all exit the Succah and trample it down. This is a test given to the non-Jew. In truth Jews are also tested. After going through a period of Asseret Yeme Teshuvah and after fasting and praying during an entire day of Yom Kippur, when we reach the highest level of spiritual feelings, we are told immediately to go out and build a Succah. This is a test for us. It is not sufficient to reach a high state of spirituality but we must leave the security of our home and go out into the world. There, with all its trials and tribulations, with all its enticements and temptations, we have to prove our faith and live up to the dictates of the Torah. If we succeed we have passed the test. That is why Succot follows on the heel of Yom Kippur. We must demonstrate that our faith is not only theoretical but is actually our very existence.
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